

# PREDNISONE

| GENERIC NAME  | REASON FOR USE  |
|---|---|
| Prednisone<br><b>Strengths:</b><br>5 mg and 50 mg tablets | Prednisone is a cortisone-like <u>anti-rejection</u> drug. This medication works to suppress your immune system in order to prevent rejection of your transplanted organ. |

## SIDE EFFECTS

### 1. STOMACH UPSET OR IRRITATION

**Take prednisone with food or milk.** An acid-reducing medication may be prescribed. Report any severe symptoms or blood in your bowel movements to a doctor right away.

### 2. WATER RETENTION

May cause swelling of the face, ankles or hands. You may need to restrict salt in your diet. A diuretic ('water pill') may be prescribed. This effect usually subsides as the dose is reduced.

### 3. FACIAL PUFFINESS

More common with higher doses. This usually subsides as the dose is reduced.

### 4. INCREASED APPETITE

Weight gain may occur if you overeat.

### 5. DIABETES (Increased blood sugar)

Your blood sugar (glucose) levels will be monitored. You may require treatment with medication if your blood glucose levels remain persistently high.

### 6. SLEEP DISTURBANCES, NIGHTMARES, MOOD CHANGES

**Take prednisone in the morning** to minimize the effect on your sleep. These effects usually subside as the dose is reduced.

### 7. BRUISING

Your blood vessels may become more fragile which can cause easy bruising. Try to protect yourself from injury.

### 8. OSTEOPOROSIS (Thinning of the bones)

Your bones may become weaker which can increase your risk of fractures. You may be advised to increase calcium in your diet, do a weight-bearing exercise such as walking, or take calcium supplements or other medications to increase bone density.

### 9. INCREASED SUSCEPTIBILITY TO INFECTION

Try to avoid close contact with people who have active infections. Report any symptoms of infection such as fever, sore throat, chills, or fast pulse to a doctor or your transplant team **immediately**.

### 10. OTHER SIDE EFFECTS MAY INCLUDE

Increased hair growth, acne, cataracts, or menstrual irregularities.

## PREDNISONE

### TAKING YOUR MEDICATION

- Prednisone is taken once daily in the morning.
- Prednisone should be taken with food or milk to prevent stomach irritation.
- The dose prescribed may be any combination of 5 mg tablets or half tablets.

*Examples:* 20 mg = 4 of the 5 mg tablets

15 mg = 3 of the 5 mg tablets

12.5 mg = 2½ of the 5 mg tablets

- Some patients who are taking larger doses may also be prescribed the 50 mg tablets.

*Examples:* 75 mg = 1½ of the 50 mg tablets

60 mg = 1 of the 50 mg tablets plus 2 of the 5 mg tablets

- Typically larger doses are prescribed initially, followed by a gradual dose reduction or 'taper'. Changes in dose are common so always check with your transplant team if you are unsure of your current dose
- **Never stop taking this drug suddenly.**

### REMEMBER

Wear/carry identification (*i.e.* Medic Alert) stating that you are taking prednisone and that you are immunocompromised.

